



COMMUNITY CHURCH LEISURE WORLD

LIGHTING
A pathway into community

GROWING
Disciples in God's Love

SENDING
The Hope and Joy of Jesus

Our Vision: To Be Love to Leisure World

14000 Church Place
Seal Beach, CA 90740-5307

Sunday Service: 9:50 AM
562-431-2503



May 18, 2025
5th Sunday of Easter



Hindering God



Rev. Johan Dodge

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS — Rev. Johan Dodge

Good Morning and Welcome to Worship! Worship is often the first place that new people come into contact with this growing community of faith. And so, if you are joining us for the first time, I say to you what is said every Sunday: You are welcome here. Here is a place where all are welcome. For such is the love of God for God's Very Good Creation.



[please stand as you are able]



CALL TO WORSHIP: Doxology

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow; praise God, all crea - tures

here be - low; praise God a - bove, ye Heav'n - ly

host: praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY — Phyllis Spencer

Surprising God, you make all things new. Long ago you called your church to a love beyond all social and cultural differences and gave them the gift of your Holy Spirit to open their hearts to enact such love. Give us that same spirit of openness, that we too might discern new directions in our day for your dream to reconcile and heal all creation. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.



HYMN: "Jesus Loves Me! This I Know"

Je - sus loves me! This I know, for the Bi - ble tells me so.
Je - sus loves me! This I know, as he loved so long a - go,
Je - sus loves me still to - day, walk - ing with me on my way,

5



Lit - tle ones to him be - long; they are weak, but he is strong.
tak - ing chil - dren on his knee, say - ing, "Let them come to me."
want - ing as a friend to give light and love to all who live.

9 *Refrain*



Yes, Je - sus loves me! Yes, Je - sus loves me!

13



Yes, Je - sus loves me! The Bi - ble tells me so.

8

[please be seated]



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION — Rev. Johan Dodge

[A time of silence is kept after each petition.]

In this season of Easter, in which we celebrate God making all things new, let us offer our prayers and thanksgivings for the community and the world.

For the well-being of your creation, that we may promote its ability to offer praise to you through spacious skies, bountiful seas, verdant lands, and precious creatures great and small.

For the life of the church, that our generous witness may broaden your table as all find a place to live and grow in love.

For the welfare of your world, that all leaders and people young and old will strive to live together in harmony while serving the common good.

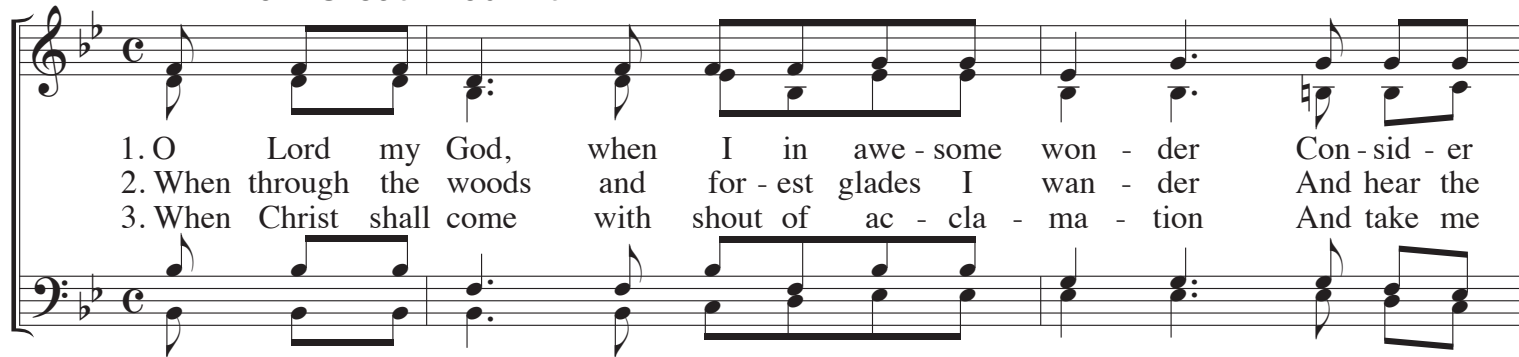
For all who suffer any violence, pain or grief, that they will know the comfort of your presence as you wipe every tear from their eyes.

For the love made known to us in Jesus through this community, for this and all other blessings we give you thanks and praise.

For all who have died, that you will bring them to the fullness of your joy, where mourning and pain will be no more.

For so many blessings, and for answered prayers, we give you thanks through Jesus in white name we pray. Amen.

HYMN: "How Great Thou Art"



1. O Lord my God, when I in awe - some won - der Con - sid - er
2. When through the woods and for - est glades I wan - der And hear the
3. When Christ shall come with shout of ac - cla - ma - tion And take me



all the worlds Thy hands have made, — I see the stars, I hear the roll - ing
birds sing sweet - ly in the trees, — When I look down from loft - y moun - tain
home, what joy shall fill my heart! — Then I shall bow in hum - ble a - dor -

6

thun - der, Thy power through - out the u - ni - verse dis - played:
grand - eur, And hear the brook and feel the gen - tle breeze: — Then sings my
a - tion, And there pro - claim, "My God, how great Thou art!" —

9

soul, my Sav-ior God, to Thee: How great Thou art! — How great Thou art! — Then sings my

13

soul, my Sav-ior God, to Thee: — How great Thou art! How great — Thou art! —

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION — Phyllis Spencer

God of promise, your word made flesh in Jesus is trustworthy and true. By the power of your Holy Spirit, may it rise up in us this day like a gift from the spring of the water of life to refresh our thirsty souls. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE — Phyllis Spencer

Acts of the Apostles 11:1-18

^{11:1}Now the apostles and the brothers and sisters who were in Judea heard that the gentiles had also accepted the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, ³saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" ⁴Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, ⁵"I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners, and it came close to me. ⁶As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. ⁷I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' ⁸But I replied, 'By no means, Lord, for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' ⁹But a second time the voice answered from heaven,



‘What God has made clean, you must not call profane.’ ¹⁰This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. ¹¹At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. ¹²The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. ¹³He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; ¹⁴he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.’ ¹⁵And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?” ¹⁸When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, “Then God has given even to the gentiles the repentance that leads to life.”

MESSAGE: “Hindering God” — Rev. Johan Dodge



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION — Rev. Johan Dodge

In Acts 11:1-18, Peter, led by the Spirit, discloses God’s new directions to heal creation. And the church reconfigures its social boundaries. The Gentiles, who were excluded from the church in Jerusalem because their eating habits were judged to be vile and unclean, are now included by the reconciling work of the Spirit. Where is God’s Spirit opening us to new direction in mission this day?

REFLECTION: “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” — John Fluker, *pianist*

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING — Phyllis Spencer

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another – just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. Let us with gladness offer to God the gifts of our labor, life, and love. **Amen.**

[Ushers, please come forward]



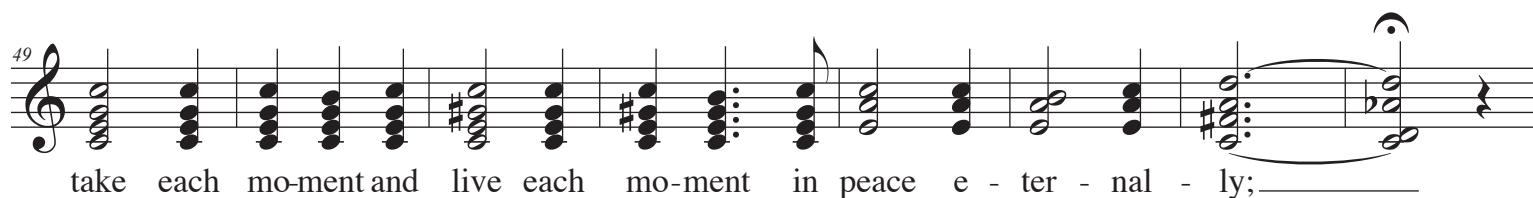
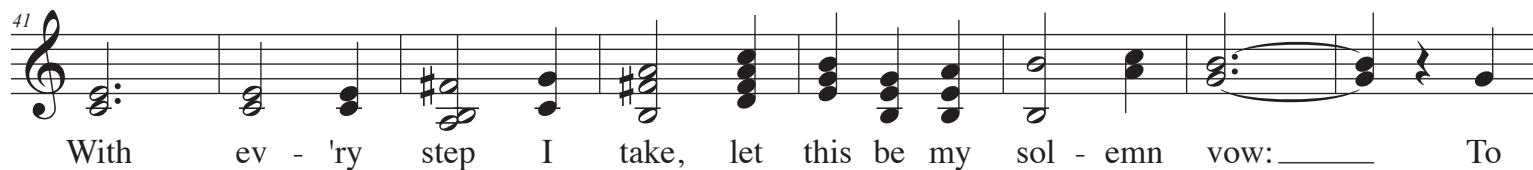
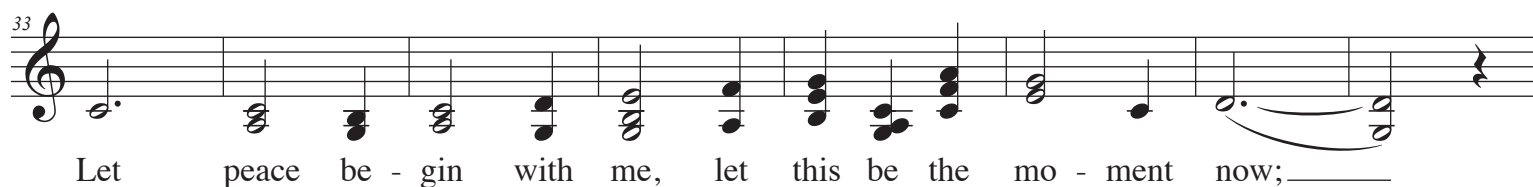
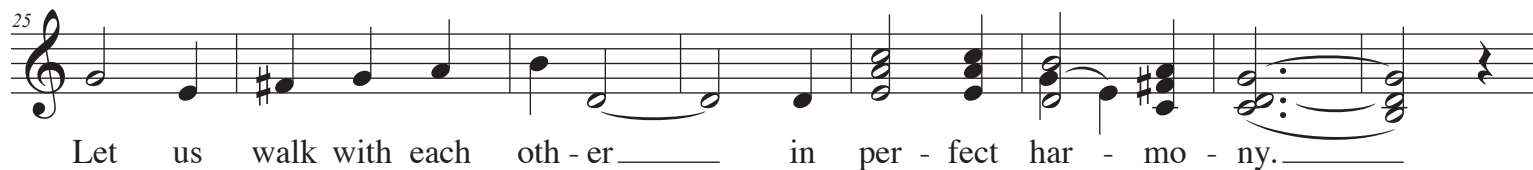
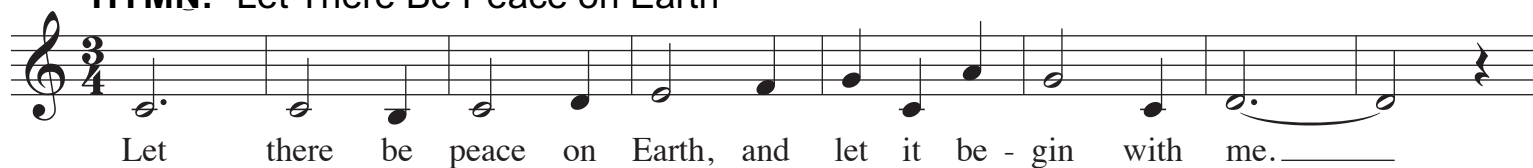
OFFERTORY: “O Spirit of the Living God” — Dave Albulario, *tenor*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING — Phyllis Spencer

Loving God, we give you thanks for the ministry of reconciliation to which you call us in the name of Jesus. Accept these gifts for your mission to heal all creation. May these gifts be a testament to your love for us as we share them in love for you. Amen.

[please stand as you are able]

HYMN: "Let There Be Peace on Earth"



BLESSING — Rev. Johan Dodge

May God who has made us a new creation together give us the grace to grow in faith, hope, love, justice and witness. Go forth in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING FORTH: “Blest Be the Tie that Binds”

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Blest Be the Tie that Binds". It is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: "Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Chris - tian love: The fel - low - ship of kin - dred minds Is like to that a - bove. A - men." The score includes vocal staves for each part and a piano accompaniment staff.

Music Team: Dave Albulario, *Tenor / Music Dir.*
John Fluker, *Pianist*

Jennifer Scoullar, *Soprano*
Hannah Yi, *Pianist*
Jim Orr, *Technology*

Doxology (*Old Hundredth LM*)
Music by Louis Bourgeois, 1551
Words by Thomas Ken, 1674

“Jesus Loves Me”
Music by William B. Bradbury
Words by Anna Bartlett Warner

“How Great Thou Art”
Traditional Swedish O *STORE GUD*
Words by Carl Boberg and Stuart K. Hine

“My Faith Looks Up to You”
Tune: *OLIVET* by Lowell Mason (1831)
Piano arrangement by Fred Bock

“O Spirit of the Living God”
Traditional English Tune: *FOREST GREEN*;
Words by Henry H. Tweedy;
Harmony by Ralph Vaughn Williams

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”
Music & Words by Sy Miller & Jill Jackson
© 1955, 1983; Arr. Copyright © 1991 by Jan
Lee Music, Beverly Hills, California

“Blest Be the Tie That Binds” (Dennis SM)
Music by Johann G. Nägeli, 1768-1836
Words by John Fawcett, 1740-1817
Arr. by Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

*All music herein transcribed & adapted by
D. Albulario for Leisure World Community
Church, Seal Beach, California.*

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PRAYER REQUESTS

new Jay & Connie Young – Jay & Connie are grateful to have been able to attend Worship on Mother’s Day, last week. Please continue to pray for their stamina and perseverance.

update Mattias Dodge – Pastor Johan’s son, Mattias recently broke his leg during a hockey game. They just found out that surgery isn’t required. He’ll be in a cast and then a boot through July, when he can start playing hockey again. Prayers for speedy recovery, healing, and safety in sports!

update Sandy Walker – Continued prayers requested for Sandy’s friend, Alexander, who had major surgery on Friday, May 9th. Prayers for a speedy recovery and healing.\

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FLOWERS and FELLOWSHIP: Today's flowers are provided anonymously. Fellowship refreshments are provided today by Jeanette Williams. See the sign-up charts to provide refreshments or cover the cost of altar flowers for future services. Altar flowers are \$35. Sandy Walker coordinates arrangements.

COFFEE WITH PASTOR: Thursday, May 22nd, join Pastor Johan for "Coffee with Pastor," a weekly time of fellowship & check-in over coffee. Questions? Want to discuss today's message? The weight of the world on your mind? Join us for a cup of coffee or tea with good company. Come & share your thoughts and a cup o' joe! As always, [ALL](#) are invited and welcome!

"WE CARE" FOOD DONATIONS: This Wednesday, We Care will be picking up LWCC food donations. If you donate any non-perishable items (*canned goods* – especially *canned proteins like tuna*; *dry goods like cereal, rice, pasta, & beans*; *oils and dressings that don't require refrigeration*; *shelf-stable milk*; *jarred nut butters and jams*; etc.), and bring them before Wednesday, they will be distributed right away.

FAREWELL LUNCHEON: After Worship on Sunday, June 1st, during Fellowship in Edgar Hall, we will host a Farewell Luncheon for **Renate Carnegie**. Renate has served as LWCC Treasurer for eight years and will be retiring to Idaho where she and her husband, Danny (*who has also served as volunteer for LWCC*) will be close to their children and grandchildren. We love you, Renate!

RECENT LWCC WORSHIP ATTENDANCE:

April 20th: 45 | April 27th: 36 | May 4th: 36 | May 11th: 41



The Season of Easter

First Sunday of Easter — Bulb Flowers



Lilies and other bulb flowers take us through the stages of transformation — bulb — buried, time in the dark of the soil, and the new life shooting forth from the bulb and producing flowers. The hymn of Promise captures this sentiment beautifully.

Second Sunday of Easter — Starfish



Starfish, like many of our animal siblings, have the ability to regenerate their limbs. Our Native American siblings venerated the starfish for their strength and immortality. The Haida Tribe even has a Starfish Clan.

Third Sunday of Easter — Water



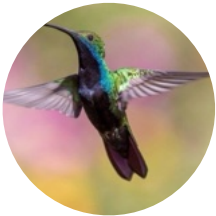
For our Jewish siblings, the mikvah — (gathering of waters) personifies both the womb and the grave and consequently, rebirth. It is regarded as a pure, unadulterated avenue of connection with God; and for that reason, it is a place where hope is reawakened and strengthened.

Fourth Sunday of Easter — Butterfly



The life of the caterpillar as it goes into a cocoon and emerges as a butterfly is perhaps the most common symbol of regeneration, transformation and new life.

Fifth Sunday of Easter — Hummingbird



Just as the Butterfly is the most common symbol of new life, the Hummingbird is perhaps one of the least well known. The seemingly effortless hovering flight of the Hummingbird reminds us of divinity, rebirth, and adaptability as the hummingbird flies from flower to flower.

Sixth Sunday of Easter — Light — Candles



Jesus said — “I am the light of the world “ and he promised his followers that we would walk in the light of life. Lighting a candle can be a powerful reminder that not only is Jesus the light of the world, but we, as his followers are also meant to bear the light of God’s love.

Seventh Sunday of Easter — Triskele



The Triskele — Triple Spiral — is a Celtic symbol used to represent the trinity and the circle of life. The three circles can represent the unity of body, mind, and soul or life, death, and new life. The cycle of life is perpetual — implying hope and the prospect of new beginnings.

May 18, 2025



GROW PRAY STUDY

Notes from the Service

My Prayers this week:

Prayer Journal

Use these prayers in your time with God each day.

Household Prayer: Morning

Delivering God, each day I awaken to your goodness and my heart cries out in praise as you set me to tasks for the life of the world. Do not let me hinder your love, but strengthen my will, as I offer thanks in every simple gesture of this day. Amen.

*Consider The Upper Room Daily Devotional
as a resource for Midday Prayer.*

Household Prayer: Evening

Faithful God, the nightly dance of earth, moon, and stars speaks of your gift; love given, love received. I give thanks this night for the love you have shown me this day. Let me rest in your peace and awaken in joy. Amen.